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Auditors from around the state to get a 'taste of Siskiyou'

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By DEBORRA BRANNON
Daily News Managing Editor

YREKA – Next month, the state controller's conference will bring all California county auditors into Siskiyou County.

Approximately 175 people are expected for the five-day event, Siskiyou County Auditor Leanna Dancer reported, and promotional efforts have been aimed at enticing participants to "come early and stay late."

It is anticipated that some conference-goers will elect to arrive the weekend before the conference opens on Monday, Oct. 15, or stay for a few days after the conference ends on Friday, Oct. 19.

Dancer said the amount of money coming into the area for the week will be "significant."

"This is the first time we've hosted this event in our own county," she said. "It's an opportunity to show this many people from all around the state what we have here. They're going to go back home and tell people, 'I'd love to go back there.'"

Dancer and Siskiyou County Director of Tourism Joanne Steele produced a brochure featuring not only conference activities, but the many activities and attractions Siskiyou County has to offer, and a few events are planned to highlight some special Siskiyou County characteristics.

Caltrans has been contacted about closing a small part of Highway 3 in Montague on Wednesday of conference week for what Dancer called "a big outdoor shindig in a real country town."

The auditors will travel to Montague on the train for a barbecue, live music and hay rides. At some point during the evening, she said, they're going to learn how to square dance. "We're asking merchants to dress in period costume and keep their shops open for business, too," she said.

On another day, the proprietor of Ms. Lynn's Teahouse will do a high tea during one of the breaks.

The entire Best Western Miner Street Inn in Yreka has been booked for the week of the conference. Local vendors, service groups, and businesses will provide just about everything needed by participants.

According to Dancer, "It's really become a county community event."

The Miner Street Inn was chosen because it is the largest facility in the county, Dancer said. And although conference-goers will be busy throughout the day, they will be free most evenings.

"I hope merchants in Yreka will consider staying open past 5 p.m. that week to give people the opportunity to shop," she said, adding that any business willing to extend its hours should contact her and she'll "get the word out" to the visiting auditors.

As of last Friday, about \$20,000 in business sponsorships had come in from local businesses, and College of the Siskiyous has donated the use of an audio-visual system.

Sponsorships will help pay for the use of Yreka's tennis courts for a conference tournament, and the Lake Shastin Golf Course for a conference golf tournament, Dancer reported.

"A lot of people in places like Burlingame have said, 'So what are we going to do? What's there to do in Siskiyou County?'" and I tell them they're going to have a good time," she said.

This event will mark only the second occasion on which Dancer has known a state controller to visit the auditors in conference - in person.

California State Controller John Chiang expects to attend on Tuesday, Oct. 17.

The event is also the largest and longest conference in the county's history, according to Dancer.

She said that Steele will put a report together afterward for the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors and all the county's chambers of commerce.

"Joanne will be able to identify areas we need to build up and talk about what went well. It should be a valuable learning experience for the county in looking forward to the possibility of hosting other large events," Dancer said.